

A NEW ANNUAL SPECIES OF *STEVIA* (ASTERACEAE: EUPATORIEAE)
FROM PUEBLA, MÉXICO

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ABSTRACT

A new annual species of *Stevia* from the municipality of Caltepec, Puebla, belonging to the series *Podocephalae*, subseries *Micrantha*, is described and illustrated. It is closely related to *S. ephemera* Grashoff, but differs markedly in its tightly corymbose capitulescence with more heads and larger florets with longer corolla lobes.

KEY WORDS: *Stevia*, Asteraceae, Eupatorieae, Puebla, Mexican flora.

Routine identification of Mexican species of Asteraceae has revealed the following novelty.

Stevia caltepecana B. Turner, *sp. nov.*, Figure 1. TYPE: MÉXICO. Puebla: Mpio. Caltepec, Cerro Chicamole, al E de Membrillos (18° 08' N, 97° 34' W), ca 2400 m. 8 Nov 1986. *Pedro Tenorio L. 12351* (HOLOTYPE: TEX; Isotypes: MEXU). The holotype sheet consists of ca 22 plants, each of these possessing delicate tap roots; the plants are all essentially alike and thus collectively comprise the holotype.

Stevia ephemerae Grashoff similis sed foliis superis ovatis, capitulis en corymbis congestis pedunculis ultimis 1-3 mm longis, et corollis majoribus lobis longioribus differt.

Delicate sparsely branched annuals 10-15 cm high, the stems glandular pubescent, arising from delicate tap roots. Leaves opposite below, alternate above, 10-15 mm long, 5-10 mm wide; petioles puberulent, 3-5 mm long; blades ovate to subdeltoid, trinervate, sparsely puberulent, glandular punctate beneath, the margins dentate with 3-6 teeth along each side. Heads 5-40, mostly arranged 5-10 in corymbose clusters, the ultimate peduncles glandular pubescent, mostly 1-3 mm long. Involucres 4-5 mm high, the bracts glandular

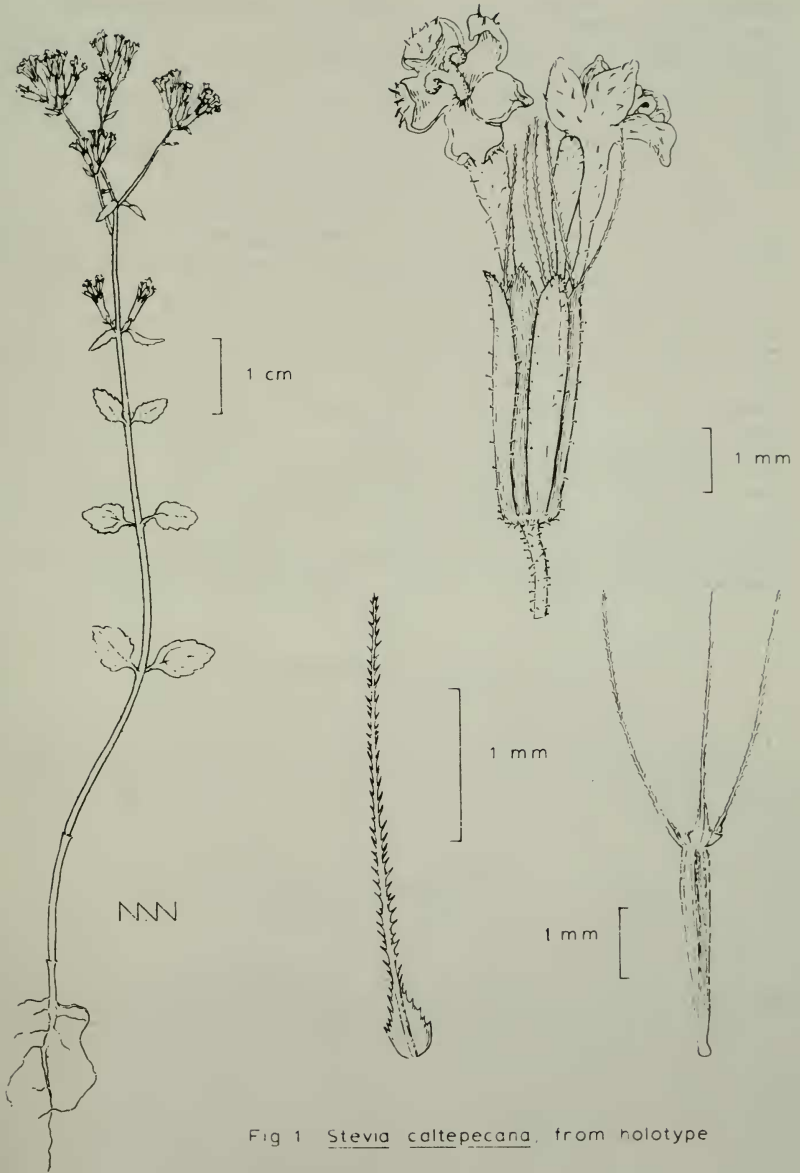


Fig 1 *Stevia caltepecana*, from holotype

pubescent or with both glandular and eglandular hairs, the apices purplish, obtuse or acute. Corollas rose colored, 4-5 mm long, the tube and lobes markedly puberulent with crinkly multiseptate trichomes. in addition, the lower portion of the tube displaying very short glandular capitate hairs; lobes variously asymmetric, 1-2 mm long. Achenes 5 to a head, 4 of these with 3 bristles each, the remaining without bristles; body of achenes 3.0-3.5 mm long, hispidulous, all of them with a short crown of white scales ca 0.3 mm long.

The species clearly belongs to the subseries *Micrantha* of *Stevia*, as treated by Grashoff (1972). The group contains six annual species: *S. aschenborniana* Sch.-Bip.; *S. mitopoda* E.L. Robins., *S. micrantha* Lag., *S. ephemera* Grashoff, *S. lita* Grashoff and *S. trifida* Lag. The new species differs from all of these in having the heads arranged in rather congested terminal corymbs, the ultimate peduncles 1-3 mm long, as opposed to 5-20 mm in the other species. Indeed, on this technical feature, the species might be positioned as the sole annual in the *Corymbosae* series of *Stevia*; habit and features of the involucre and florets, however, are clearly more like those of the subseries *Micrantha*, which Grashoff placed in the series *Podocephalae*. So positioned, *S. caltepecana* appears closest to *S. ephemera* of Oaxaca, which occurs in the vicinity of Tlaxiaco, possessing the habit, vestiture and involucral characters of that species. It differs markedly however, in its more numerous heads which are arranged in congested corymbs and the corollas are larger with longer lobes.

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LITERATURE CITED

- Grashoff, J. 1972. A systematic study of the North and Central American species of *Stevia*. Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Texas, Austin.